



50th Year Reunion  
Class Project

# Biographies Photos Stories

First Edition

Class of 1965  
Sherman E. Burroughs  
High School  
Ridgecrest, CA

Reunion  
Temecula Creek Inn  
Temecula, CA  
February 26-28, 2016



# Biographies, Photos, Stories

June 11, 2015 marked the 50th anniversary of our graduation from Burroughs High School. Since this is quite a milestone, a few classmates started talking about having a reunion last year. Karen Day Manatt offered to help organize and reached out to many classmates. Eventually, Kären Bjorklund Locklin and Charlotte Blackmon Collins got on board. We soon found out that there was a lot of excitement about this event, so rather than rushing it for the fall of 2015, we chose this date in February 2016. Thanks to all who have participated in this effort to reconnect and celebrate!

—Karen Bjorklund Locklin & Karen Day Manatt

Contained in this eBook are some of our classmates' biographies, photos and reminiscences. This collection aims to transport us back to many of the happy memories of our childhood and teen years in a very isolated and insulated environment. Back then, fifty years ago, the world at large was quite a different place. We grew up after WWII, during the Cold War, and were part of a scientific and military community in the middle of California's Mojave Desert. In Ridgecrest/China Lake, however, we kids felt a sense of security in the orderly pace of life both in the town and on the base, but especially in our high school, Sherman E. Burroughs High.

Although we studied and played in close proximity to some of the world's most dangerous weaponry, and each day war planes streaked through the bluest of skies on test flights, we enjoyed peaceful and untroubled days and nights. Of course we suffered teenage dilemmas and crises. But overall, most of us would probably agree, in high school, we had a really great time! As we look back through each other's eyes and histories, on this occasion, we can recall with gratitude the joy and friendships we experienced.

At the same time, this collection aims to bring us up to date with each other through the biographies that are shared and the conversations they may spur. Fifty years is indeed a lifetime. Most of us have worked at one or more careers; many have produced one or two generations (children and grandchildren); and many have retired only to set out on entirely new adventures or pursuits.

Special thanks to the classmates who contributed to this eBook!

—Charlotte Blackmon Collins



# Betty Kowalski Achenbaugh



Hello to all of my classmates ~

It has been a long journey, 50 years has gone by so quickly. It does not seem possible that we will be having a 50 year class reunion. We are the lucky ones who have made it to our 50th reunion.

I have raised two children in Orange County California. My son has a jewelry business and my daughter is an elementary school teacher.

My daughter has a 15 year old daughter. She is a sophomore in high school. She enjoys swimming and volleyball.

My son has a 6 year son. He enjoys coming to California and spending time going to Disneyland and to the beaches.

I am now retired spending time vacationing, and traveling with my husband and family.

I have attached a few pictures of me and my two grandkids.

Your Classmate,

*Betty (Kowalski) Achenbaugh*

PHOTOS (from top)

1. Betty, Las Vegas, 2015
2. Grandson, 1st fishing trip
3. Granddaughter, 15th birthday Dana Point



# Harold “Buddy” Phillips



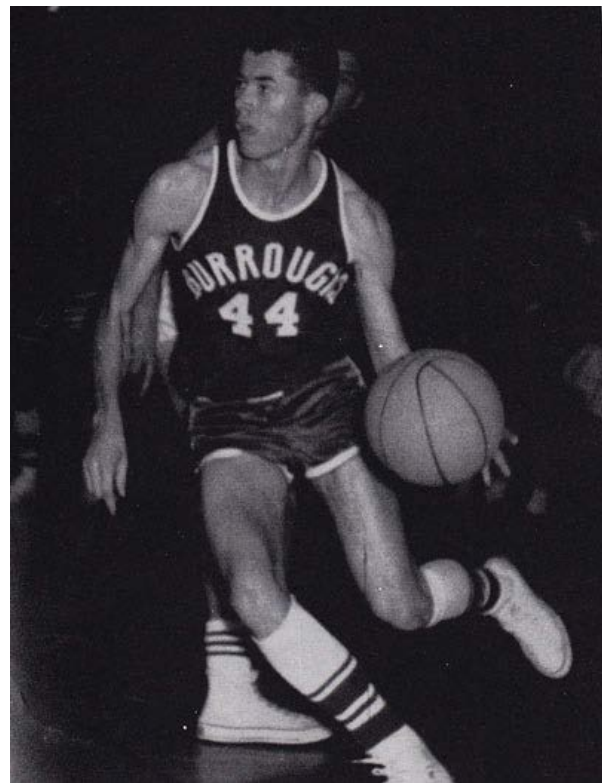
Buddy with the Family.



Brother Karl, sister, and Buddy.



Buddy holding brother Karl's grandson, Jayden.



Buddy plays basketball for Burroughs, 1965.



## Contributed by Harold “Buddy” Phillips



### 1960 CHINA LAKE LITTLE LEAGUE ALLSTARS

Top Row-Left To Right-Ralph Moore[66], Bill Eason[65], John Roseth[65], Steve Metcalf[66], Terry Hogue[65], Albert Hyles[66], Herbie Pinto[66], Tom Kliene[66] Bottom Row-Left To Right: Steve Troy[66], Tom Clow[65], John Martin[66], Gary Cotton[66], David Luzinas[65], Ted Sprouse[66], Mike Mead[66], Mike Sorge[66]



### GIANTS N.O.T.S. CHINA LAKE (c. 1963)

Top Row: Left To Right: Manager-Giants, John Manger[66], Steve Metcalf[66], Ted Sprouse[66] Barney Franich[66] Billy Byrd[66], Tom Clow[65], Albert Hyles[66], David Martin. Kneeling: From Left To Right: Dean Smith[66], David Luzinas[65], Tom Hibbs[66], John Martin[66], Herbie Pinto[66], Warren Turnbaugh[65], Buddy Phillips[65], Roy Schultz (?) [66].

## Fran Riggs Fenical

We graduated in 1965, but I didn't leave high school until just a few years ago. That's when I retired after working with high school kids for over thirty years. I always wanted to be a teacher, and I guess I had so much fun in high school that I didn't want to leave it.

My life, in a nutshell: After BHS, I went to UC Riverside and majored in Sociology, got married, had a son, moved to the San Diego area, taught high school social studies, got a master's in counseling, worked with at-risk teenagers, earned a doctorate in educational leadership, and served as a founding principal where I was fortunate to have the opportunity to lead a talented staff in creating an innovative high school of choice in Encinitas.

Now that I'm retired, I'm traveling with my husband, a professor at UC San Diego whose research is leading to the development of new drugs for the treatment of cancer and infectious diseases; spending time with our son, a coastal engineer, and his family (two fabulous grandkids!); helping my mother; boating and camping; and doing volunteer work. I feel lucky to live a happy and healthy life, and I'm grateful to China Lake/Ridgecrest friends for such wonderful memories of our early years.



Fran with her husband, son, daughter-in-law, and two grandkids.



Fran with sister, Cindy and their mother.



# Glenn C. Pritchard



## **Burroughs High School, Class of 1965**

I was born in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1947. As part of a military family, I lived in a lot of places in the 1950s. In fact, my father was in-between assignments when I was born. After my dad retired from the

US Navy in 1959, our family eventually settled in Ridgcrest/China Lake. To this day, I thank my father (May he rest in peace!) for two wonderful decisions. One was his decision to retire from the military which meant no more irregular and disruptive family moves. The other was his decision to settle in a tranquil and serene desert town instead of an agitated and stirred up city. I believe that this made all the difference in my future development. I proudly graduated from Sherman E.

Burroughs High School in 1965. I graduated with a B.A. degree from the University of California in 1969 and a M.A. degree from California State University in 1971. Later in 1993, I successfully completed coursework for the Executive Business Program at George Washington University in Washington, DC.

Although I started my federal career in 1972 at China Lake, I permanently relocated to Washington, DC in 1978. After 34 years of challenging yet enjoyable service with the Departments of Defense, Interior, Justice and Homeland Security, I retired in 2006. My final executive position was National Administrator, Health, Environment and Safety, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security. During my career I published numerous technical papers and reports, gave a variety of presentations at national conferences and received various government and private sector awards and accolades.

I feel blessed to be married to a lovely lady



James Monroe Jr. High Graduation, 1961, American Legion Scholarship Awards recipients: Wanda Smith, Glenn Pritchard, Karen Day, and Buddy Phillips.



Burroughs Junior Prom  
Janis Little and Glenn Pritchard

named Barbara (nee Bann). We have been together happily for 28 years. After being a desert rat in my formative years, I am now a confirmed water rat. Not only do Barbara and I relish spending time at our lake residence and the beach, all of our overseas travels have been to countries with picturesque coastlines. Vacationing in a desert wilderness is not in our future.

I have two wonderful daughters, Laura and Rebecca, from a previous marriage to Susan (nee Brown). I have five beautiful grandchildren, Jensen (Sr. @ James Madison University), Delaney (Fr. @ University of



Burroughs High School Graduation 1965  
Glenn Pritchard, Susan Brown

Virginia), Jacob (12th grade), Jacqlyn (10th grade), and Riley (8th grade). I particularly love sharing amusing stories and coordinating family vacations or outings with the children and grandchildren. Weekdays are filled with activities associated with golf, gym, and yard work. Countless weekends are spent attending the grandkids' sporting events. (We are fortunate to be less than 1 ½ hours away.) Most importantly, and I believe the secret to our marital happiness, Barbara and I fervently follow a "his, hers and ours" philosophy. This applies especially to money, time and friends.



From left standing: Jacqlyn 15 (granddaughter), Jensen 22 (granddaughter), Delaney 19 (granddaughter), Glenn & Barbara; Jacob 18 (grandson), Joe (son in law). From left sitting: Erin ( friend) Riley 13 (grandson), Becky (daughter), & Laura (daughter).



# Frank McElfish

After graduation, I attended Long Beach State College which was very overwhelming since my chemistry class attendance was larger than the 1965 graduating class. Unsure of many things, I enlisted in the Air Force in 1966. I married in 1970 to Lorna Jackson of Bakersfield and we both graduated Cal Poly – Pomona afterward.



We have two sons and five grandchildren (ages 5-15), all living within a short drive. Our oldest son is a contracts attorney and his wife is an executive assistant. Our younger son is a deputy sheriff and his wife runs the wine club for her family winery. Our four grandsons are doing very well in school, sports, and Trail Life USA. Our one granddaughter (the oldest) enjoys children's choir and will be testing for her karate black belt in the next year.



Maui 2014. Lorna and Frank.

My professional career has been the production and quality assurance of Navy weapon systems. I retired from DoD (Navy) with 28 years and worked for several defense contractors for 13 years.

Although Lorna and I were raised in church, our relationship with Jesus did not really begin until we were attending college. Since then, our priorities are service to God first, our family, and then our country. I attended Bible college for a few years and have been very involved in our churches as we moved. We moved about seven times, all within California except for our retirement move 6 years ago to the Reno, NV area.

I was very involved with the Boy Scouts of America for over 33 years. Both of my sons are Eagle Scouts and I served as Webelos leader, Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, Troop Committee Chairman, and Unit Commissioner. I now serve as the northern Nevada point man for Trail Life USA which is a Christian faith-based outdoor adventure boys program.



Lake Tahoe 2015. Adults (L to R): Luke (son), Stacy (Luke's wife), Lorna (my wife), me, Clint (son), Peggy (Clint's wife). Grandkids (L to R): Caleb, Tucker, Ian, Sean, and Madison

Lorna and I love to travel. We have owned several RVs and, with our sons, have seen almost every state in our great country. While still RVing locally, we have taken several international trips including cruises and plan on doing many more. Our favorite vacation spot is Maui.

Both of our dads are with the Lord. My mom is 88 and living with my sister in Ojai.

Lorna's mom is 94 and living close to her son in Bakersfield.

Lorna and I are so grateful for our lives together, our family, and friends. God has blessed us and we look forward to our future doing His will the best we can.



## Diana Douglas Bundy

I live in the Gold Country of the foothills between Sacramento and Reno. I did not grow up anywhere, having been a Navy Junior. I came to Ridgecrest as a Sophomore from Rhode Island.



I wrote, technically and creatively, for most of my career. I taught at Burroughs in (gee, when?) 1970s-something, and also taught creative writing up at the junior college. Otherwise, I worked for Comarco as a contractor for the Navy, for a variety of projects, mostly in the full-scale aircraft targets program out at Hangar Three.

I substitute taught at other schools in Ridgecrest, in Ohio, and up here. In Penn Valley, I wrote a column for the local paper for four or so years.

My husband is Joey Bundy. He worked on the base, but did not go to school in Ridgecrest.

I feel like I am leaving myself out of a very fun encounter. I am getting involved remotely!

I hope you have a good time in Temecula.

*Diana*



Diana (Douglas) and Joey Bundy



Diana Douglas Bundy



# Greg Garman



After our Burroughs graduation, I attended California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), San Luis Obispo and earned a BS in Biology in 1970, focusing on marine science. I also graduated that year from the Army ROTC program at Cal Poly (eventually serving 10 years with Army Reserve hospital units as a Medical Service Corps officer). After Cal Poly, I entered graduate school at Oregon State University and completed an MS in Zoology in 1972, with a focus on comparative physiology and biochemistry. I began teaching at Centralia College in SW Washington State in 1973 and have recently retired after 41 years. Courses I taught included Anatomy, Physiology, Microbiology, Human Biology, and Marine Biology. I was also fortunate to author and co-author scientific articles on fish ecology and plant toxicity, as well as college textbooks on microbiology and human biology. In the local community, I served as president and campaign chairman for United Way and as the organizing president for the CAPRI (exercise for heart rehabilitation) program of Lewis County.

As a two-year, community-focused institution, Centralia College was a perfect teaching venue for me. I had freedom to develop new classes and experiment with different modes of instruction. Over the years, I certainly had many top-of-the-class students who later went on to practice medicine or dentistry or law. Most of my students however, were taking classes as prerequisites to careers

in the health sciences, such as nursing or dental hygiene or radiographic technology. Many were returning adult students who had not had a rewarding experience in high school and would not have succeeded in reaching those careers if I and others had not been there to teach basic study skills and to give encouragement when accomplishments lagged behind expectations. It is so pleasing now to see them practicing their careers in our community. A few years ago, my mother-in-law was confined on the critical care floor of our local hospital. When I visited her and realized half of the nurses on the floor were my former students, I knew she would indeed be in good hands. A proud moment for me occurred a few weeks ago, when a local dentist (former biology student) told our 17 year old grandson, who is considering a pre-med or pre-dent college major, that I had been her favorite teacher in all her years of education. Though I have received many teaching awards, moments like that are much more precious and make all those long hours of grading lab reports seem worthwhile indeed.

In 1966, I met Linda Marshall (Arcadia HS; 1964) at Cal Poly and we married in 1968. Linda finished her BA in English there in 1969. Together, we have 3 children and 5 grandchildren who live near us in Washington. Our son is the oldest of the children and is the office manager for a regional distribution center. The oldest daughter is a nurse and also admissions specialist and the youngest daughter is a medical social worker. The grandchildren, 3 boys and 2 girls range in age from 9 to 23. A great grandson is expected this

fall!

Linda worked locally for nearly 30 years work as a travel agent. After retirement, she became a Master Gardener through a Washington State University program. Though we have recently sold our large, rural home of 35 years and moved to a smaller house in a retirement community, we still have plenty of room for Linda to manage her flowers, shrubs, trees, and shade gardens. I help, but am mostly relegated to keeping up a modest vegetable garden nearby! Together, we enjoy time with family and friends, our pet dog and cat, bird watching, and lots of travel. With Linda's expertise, we have cruised and river boated and visited many places in the US as well as a bit of China, European and Mediterranean countries, as well as Caribbean islands, and Hawaii. We are approaching our 50th wedding anniversary and beginning to plan where we might celebrate.

No, my life and career did not unfold quite as I anticipated in high school. Back then, I enjoyed working with dad and friends on cars and thought I might make a good automotive engineer. I actually started at Cal Poly with a major in mechanical engineering, but struggled mightily in physics and calculus. After two quarters, I changed majors to Biology and found it a perfect match for me. Perhaps it was the lizards and snakes and scorpions I collected in the desert near my China Lake home or the pigeons and turtles and a raven we raised in the backyard that sparked that interest. I later worked as a lab assistant at Cal Poly and as both a teaching assistant and a research assistant at OSU and gradually began to enjoy the teaching experiences more than the research activities. Even in the Army Reserve, I spent as much

time teaching anatomy and physiology to medics in training as I did working as a clinical laboratory officer. As I look back now, my career in community college education was a perfect fit and I would not change a bit of it. Well, maybe I would skip a few of those tedious faculty meetings!

Linda and I kept moving north from the Southern California of our youth and family members eventually followed after us. Mom and dad retired to a small ranch in Eagle Point, OR that our children loved visiting for almost 25 years. They later moved to nearby Olympia and are now buried there. Linda's mother moved to a care facility Centralia following a debilitating stroke. My sister Lisette (Burroughs Class of 1969 and Cal Poly Home Economics 1972) lives in Renton, WA near Seattle. She has recently retired as a high school librarian and is married to Kent Cauble, who was a next door neighbor at China Lake in the late 1950s.



Engagement 1967



Wedding 1968



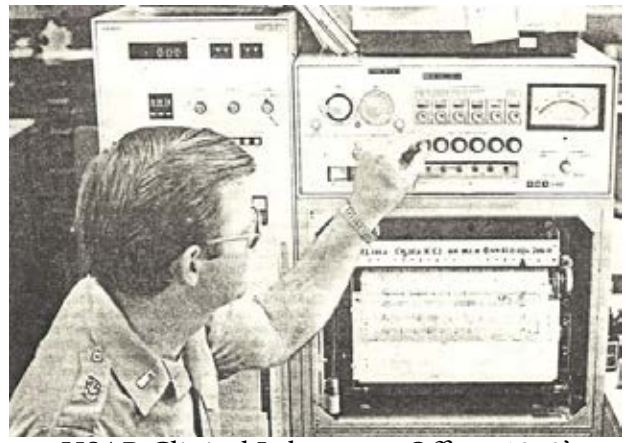
# GREGORY AND LINDA GARMAN PHOTO CHRONOLOGY



New College Instructor 1973



Young Family 1973



USAR Clinical Laboratory Officer 1970's



Growing Family 1980's



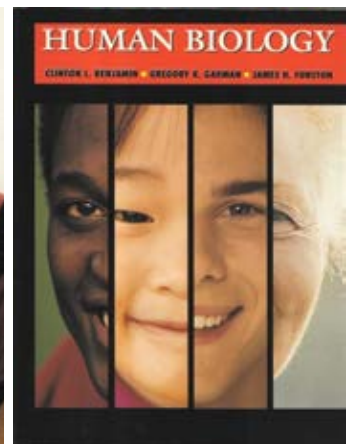
Teaching Anatomy, Physiology, and Microbiology 1980's and 90's.



Summit, Mt. St. Helens 1989



25th Anniversary Paris 1993



McGraw-Hill Text 1997



Fun in Washington's Cascade Mountains 1990s - 2000s







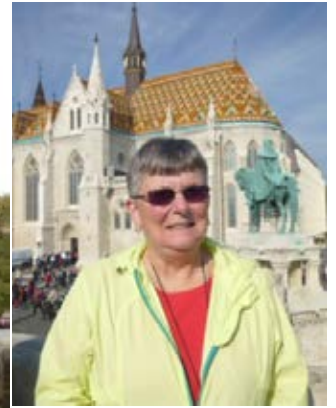
Announcing Retirement  
2006



Adriatic Cruise, London to Dubrovnik, Croatia 2012



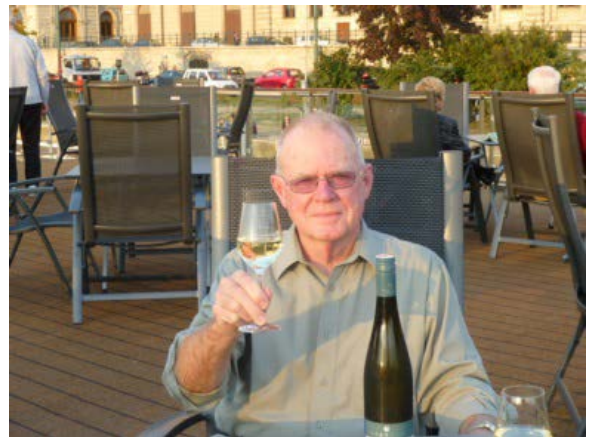
Mt. Rushmore 2013



Viking River Cruise, Amsterdam to Budapest 2013



Fun with Grandkids 1990s - 2000s



Happy BHS Class of '65 Reunion Toast!!



# John Roseth



Greetings to all from John Roseth,  
Wausau, Wisconsin,



When I was in high school I always wanted to be older. What was I thinking? Has it really been 50-years since we graduated from Burroughs High School in 1965.

The next four years were spent at California Lutheran College in Thousand Oaks where I went to class (most of the time) and played football. Following graduation ('69) Darlene and I were married in San Francisco and headed off for Minnesota where I entered Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul and Darlene taught in an elementary school.

Following graduation ('73) and ordination we moved to Cheyenne, WY where I served my first congregation. Three years later we received a call to serve a congregation near Milwaukee, WI. And then in 1980 we moved to Wausau, WI where I began a congregation, Saint Andrew Lutheran Church, serving there for 32-years. I retired in 2012.

While Darlene continued to teach until she retired 2005 we raised our three sons: Cary, Aaron, and Jeremy. Cary is a professor at Michigan State University, Aaron is an architect in Minneapolis, and Jeremy teaches at Lake Superior College in Duluth, MN.

Now that I've reached that time in life when I no longer want to be older, I welcome the opportunity to travel, take long walks, read, and spend time with our six grandchildren, teaching them how to fish and make things out

of wood.

So, since graduating from high school I have learned that:

- The results of those aptitude tests we took in high school weren't that accurate.
- Nothing messes up your weekend when you suddenly realize it's only Tuesday.
- Girls don't really have cooties  
(after 47-years of marriage I've grown quite fond of my wife)
- I can learn how to work a remote, a computer, and a smart phone
- That credentials on a wall do not make you a decent human being
- Two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different
- If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito

And I've learned that:

- I am truly privileged to be growing old
- God has incredibly blessed my life
- Life is short, and  
eternity is a long time

Enjoy the 50th reunion of the Class of 1969. I hope that after a slow dance to "Yesterday" by the Beatles you can still do the "Wooly Bully" by Sam the Sham and Pharaohs.



# Jon Oshel

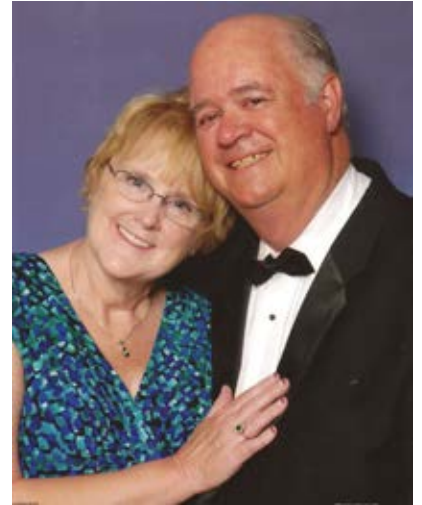
By far the most important accomplishments in my life are all related to my family. I have been happily married to my wife Ginny for 43 years. We have three grown daughters, all happily married and successful in the careers of their choice. Our nine grandkids, who all live locally, continue to be a joy.



I continued being active in the Boy Scouts, including a couple of years as a Training Ranger at the Philmont National Boy Scout Camp. I was a Scoutmaster until shortly after my third daughter was born.

I have been in many community theatre productions. Some of my favorite rolls have been: Charlie Brown in You're a Good Man Charlie Brown; Lazar Wolf in Fiddler on the Roof; King Pelinor in Camelot; Hucklebee in The Fantastiks; and Horace Vandergelder in Hello Dolly.

I graduated from San Diego State University with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. After college I went to work for the Washington State Highway department for six years in Ellensburg Washington, working primarily on Snoqualmie Pass and on the new alignment of I-82 between Ellensburg and Yakima.



I then began my 38 year career in County Roads (if it isn't a state highway, city street or federal forest road, then it is probably a county road). I was the County Engineer for Deschutes County in Bend Oregon for six years. Then three years as a consultant engineer working on county roads.

My defining job was as the Tillamook County Director of Public Works. I spent 18 years working for the small coastal Tillamook County. Tillamook County is best known for their cheese and being the Oregon county hardest hit by winter storms (Average rainfall = 90+ inches per year). During my tenure we had over 70 major slide repairs which required engineering solutions to reopen the roadways. We also had seven federally declared emergency events. I became a statewide expert in both FHWA and FEMA funding programs. 48 of the county's 96 bridges were



Oshel grandkids.



either replaced or had a major rehabilitation project. While all this was going on Tillamook County, which is dependent of forest revenues, had to deal with these declining revenues. All of the above was accomplished as the crew size reduced from 55 to 35 employees. To reduce the funding impacts I became an expert in grant acquisition. I obtained over \$41 Million in federal and state grants for work on Tillamook County roads and bridges. This represented 49% of the money spent on Tillamook County Roads. It also made me a statewide expert which led to me next job.

I spent the last twelve years as the County Road Manager with the Association of Oregon Counties. In this roll I provided support technical and management support for the county road officials all over Oregon. A major portion of the work was to provide county road advocacy at the state and federal level. But the fun part was that I got to drive all the rarely seen byways of Oregon.

I retired in 2013 and now spend my time involved with theatre, golf, fishing and mostly playing with grandkids.



John at Devil's Pike's Peak.



John at Brice Canyon.



John at Devil's Tower.



John in Hawaii.

# Karen Day Henderson Manatt

After high school graduation I attended Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA. I majored in Home Economics and Art. At the end of my Junior year, I married Robert Henderson, June 1968. We were going to live in Sacramento, so transferred to Sacramento State University and finished my B.A. in Home Economics and Art in 1969. I then added a Teaching Credential in Home Economics, Art and Social Science in 1970. I had my son Todd in 1971 in Sacramento and my daughter Amy in 1975 in Portland. I taught Home Economics at an all girl's private Catholic High School for three years. Bob and I separated shortly after the birth of our daughter, and we then divorced in early 1976. I moved with my children back to Ridgecrest in February 1976 to be near my parents.



young man.

I eventually got that Home Economics teaching job in 1984, along with a few Art and Social Studies classes, at James Monroe. Such fun. I taught many of my classmate's children, nieces and nephews. During this time I was active in the community too. I was a Blue Bird Leader, Sunday School Teacher, and served on United Way and Homemaker Board of Directors, and held a variety of PTA offices. I taught at James Monroe for 11 years. Within the school district I served as a mentor teacher several terms and was instrumental in the establishment James Monroe's student intervention team along with Susie Ernst. I served on the teacher negotiation team

There were no teaching jobs for a Home Ec. Teacher in Ridgecrest, so I struggled for several years as a single parent working five part time jobs (taught vocational skills at the ARC, sewed professionally, conducted quilting workshops, provided child care and cleaned houses) to make ends meet. I met my present husband Bill Manatt in March 1977 in the Ridgecrest "Rocket Park". We were watching our children play. Bill was a teacher at Burroughs High School teaching English (he eventually taught Spanish and Russian too). He was raising his son Tim, whose age was in between my two children. Bill and I married 11-1980. Bill retired from teaching in 2002. Sadly, Bill lost his son Tim to cancer in June 2011. Tim was a very intelligent and well-read



Karen (Day) and Bill Manatt



(DATA) for 10 years. In 1999 I received the DATA's "Who's Who Award" for my service.

Serving on the negotiation team allowed me to see that Home Economics and other electives were to eventually be cut. So I went back to college. I taught Home Economics during the day and commuted after school to Bakersfield State University one to two nights a week for three years. I traveled at times with Susie Ernst and was enrolled in some classes with Sukey Kielman too. Finishing course work in 1995 was tough. Along with my regular teaching assignment during the day, I added Student Teaching to my lunch period in January and February to complete the Special Education Credential. Next I traveling to Visalia every weekend in March and April for course work and tested out to earn a Special Education Resource Specialist Degree. Finally, in May I completed three thesis projects to earn a Master Degree in Special Education. I



Owens family: Tim (husband), my daughter Amy with Nolan age 9 and Audrey age 6.

taught in Special Education for nine years in the classroom and then moved on to Special Education Program Specialist for three years, retiring in June 2007.

In April 2006 I received the Sierra Sands Unified School District Teacher of the Year. I took my Johannesburg 2nd and 3rd grade teacher Mrs. Stanley with me as my guest. I found that the comments Mrs. Stanley wrote on my grade cards back then were almost the same comments made about my service for the school district. I retired in June 2007 and moved to Mt Vernon, Washington.

My children had moved to Seattle in 1993, my son to work with his father and my daughter to attend college. They met and married into families who had lived in Seattle for many years. So when the grandchildren came, I wanted to live close to them. Todd and



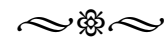
Son Todd Henderson and Stephanie (wife) with Ella age 6 1/2 and Allison age 11.

Stephanie Henderson's daughters are Allison 11 and Ella 6. Amy and Tim Owens son Nolan is 9 and their daughter Audrey is to be 6 in December. They are the absolute joys of my life, and being active in their lives has been a blessing. I am so proud of my children and their spouses. Along with being great parents, they all are college graduates, work and are volunteers in their communities. They are great contributing member to our society.

Mt. Vernon is a small town, 60 miles north of Seattle in a valley full of farms with amazing recreation opportunities nearby. Bill and I love the area and have made friends and found

lots to do. I am in a Genealogy Group, Book Club, and a member of Soroptomist and DAR service organization. In addition, I regularly attend the local YMCA for exercise classes. And I spend lots of time with my children and grandchildren.

I feel that the core of who I am is directly linked to my growing up in the desert in that very special time. The experience I had, the people I knew, the education I received and my family and friends have helped me along my way. Thank you and best wishes to all of you.



## Karen Miller Gugel

I met my husband, Jerry, in 1964, at China Lake where he was serving in the Navy. We married after I graduated from high school and set down roots in Wisconsin, where he grew up. Over the years, through my husband's childhood, our work lives and other encounters, we've developed many friendships here. My husband's family lives here in Wisconsin, in Michigan and in Alaska. I've loved living here from the beginning.



Jerry and I were life partners. He passed away after 48 years of marriage. We both were fortunate to have solid occupations. My husband worked for the telephone company for 25 years and after our two kids were in school, I started to work in the banking field, staying with the same company for 35 years. We lived in the country/lake area near Eau Claire, Wisconsin for most of our married life.

Our daughter's great love for the outdoors

led her to her current occupations as park ranger, hunting guide and outdoor writer. She is also an avid hunter and angler. Our son was an accomplished, passionate artist who loved fly fishing and rooting for the Green Bay Packers. He studied and worked in building design and construction before his death in 2012.

My side of the family is still all out west but I enjoy visiting my mother, sister and two brothers as often as I can. Mom remains



My brothers: Jack, class of 61 and Lonnie, class of 68 with our Mom in the middle



an awesome part of my life and even at the age of 95, she continues to inspire me and make me laugh. My Dad taught me the joys of discovering new and wonderful vacation spots. Jerry always supported that love within me too, so as a family, we had some interesting trips together. Now, as my retirement life is evolving, I continue to plan for opportunities to travel with family and friends.

Other than traveling, my life is centered around my daughter, my home and my two cats. Occasionally I still do some fishing, snowshoeing, go on day trips and other entertainment outings with friends. I am blessed with pretty good health so far and try to keep active. Although it can be time consuming, it has been fun keeping up with the activities of my friends and relations on social media.



Myself and my sister, Sonja (class of 63) taken in 2015 at my house.



Me snowshoeing on a northern lake, 2014.



My Mom and daughter, Tess, playing bean bag toss game, 2014.

## Matt Jaffe



From my sophomore year at Burroughs, I went to Granada Hills High School in the San Fernando Valley. I didn't graduate from there, or any other high school, but was accepted at Berkeley anyway, where I majored in mathematics (and managed to graduate). I met my wife, Donna Cheri Krafft, there and married her at the age of 19. Here's a picture of us the day we were married:



After Berkeley I joined the Navy, doing tours at the Pentagon and on a frigate in the Gulf of Tonkin at the end of the Vietnam war. During that period of time, Donna and I had two children and somewhere in there I picked up a master's degree in aeronautical systems from the University of West Florida. After leaving active duty, I spent the next twenty years or so working as a software engineer in the aerospace industry and enjoying the raising of our kids with Donna. Here's a picture of us then:





Our son is now a software engineer in Los Angeles; our daughter is an astrophysicist living and working, and raising our grandchildren in the south of France (so unpleasant to have to visit her ;-). Here's my daughter with her children:



And my son with his soon to be wife:



Here's me towards the end of that time in the aerospace industry (most of it at the old Hughes Aircraft Company); I'm comfortably middle aged and developing a nice pot belly

but here enjoying the beauty of my wife, who never aged and claimed that I was more handsome than the callow youth she married. (Other than that and similar delusions, she was a remarkably sensible woman.)



It was during my time in the aerospace business that I picked up a Ph.D. in Information and Computer Science from UC Irvine, which led eventually to my accepting a faculty position at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona, where I am now a professor and the program chair for software engineering. Torturing undergraduates is now both my vocation and my avocation. My students tell me I'm good at it. Here's me in academic regalia for a recent graduation:





Donna, the beauty and joy of my life, died this last April; we had been married for 47 years. I am much diminished and still often in pain, but generally content with my life, lived now, to steal a bit from Keats, in the shadow of an absence. Here is the last picture ever taken of us, about a day before she died. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*



## Sukey Kielman Briggs

I was born on the Mojave Desert, an ecosystem of relentless sky and haunting deception—an environment of subtle beauty and isolation.



College education in the late '60s kicked me into fermenting US unrest: Vietnam, civil right, women's rights, birth control, legalized abortion, a panoply of mind-altering drugs, political assassinations, and celebrity overdoses. Higher education solidified my love of words... there was a lot to write about; there was a lot being written, ranted, grieved.

Maternity was a game changer: umbilical love fused with responsibility. Ten years after the birth of my son, I garnered degrees in English, studio art, transpersonal psychology, and three CA teaching credentials. Frameable and disposable certificates were stepping stones across careers as an English and art teacher, learning specialist and writing circle facilitator in Santa Barbara, copyeditor, graphic artist, and currently as the assistant to a 95-yr-old hotshot xeriscape artist (Go, Luis!).

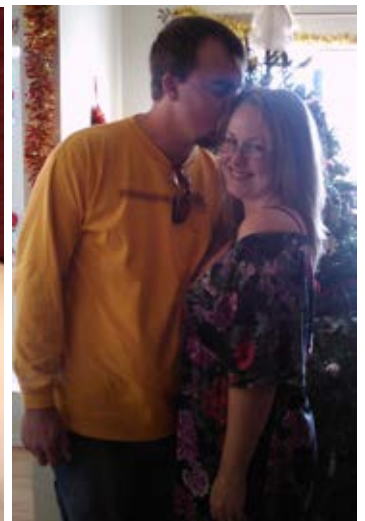
For years, on Monday nights, I wrote with a small, closed circle of women in Santa Barbara, CA. It was and is my experience that we can lie to ourselves and others, but the words we write in circle unequivocally reveal our hearts and can heal our spirits.

I facilitate women's writing circles. My prompts are aligned with the cycles of female life and the rhythm of the natural world.

I live in the Sierra Nevada foothills in a village without stoplights. Life is, as always, a wonder and a mystery.



Sukey



Sukey's son Gram and his fiancée Julie.



# Rob Johnson

After 1965, Rob went to college at Claremont McKenna College. The summer after graduation, he went to Alaska as a BLM forest fire-fighter and fell in love with the place. Before moving there permanently in 1974, he completed law school at Stanford and spent time overseas. In Alaska, Rob started work as an assistant attorney general and then, from 1979-81, was appointed the state's director of petroleum revenue responsible for assessing, auditing, and collecting the state's oil and gas wealth. From 1981 through his retirement last year, Rob has been an attorney in private practice and has been involved in diverse matters such as the Exxon Valdez litigation, public employee/teacher strikes, and battles over the value of the TransAlaska Pipeline. Throughout, Rob has traveled extensively (from Afghanistan and Armenia to Prudhoe Bay and Ridgecrest!). He is married to Sue; he has one son Nathan, plus a stepson and grandson through Sue. They all live in Anchorage.





## Climbing Mt. Whitney c. 1967



Flashback 1967-ish! Mt. Whitney hike:

(Left) At the Portals: Scott Hall, Rob Johnson, John Licwinko, Tom Allan, Tom Frisbee and Dwight Morgan.

(Right) Taken near the top of Mt. Whitney. Tom Allen must have taken the photo because he's not in it. Photos from Scott Hall.

## Carvel in the Middle—How did he do that?



c. 1962, Jim Heflin, Charlotte Blackmon, Greg Garman, Karen Allison, Carolyn Turner, Tom Clow, Carole LaComb, Susan Nelligan & Carvel Bass reclining. Photo from Judy Cliff McGinnis.



c. 1962. Karen Allison, Jim Heflin, Charlotte Blackmon (?), Patsy Allen, Judy Cliff & Carvel in the middle. Photo from Judy Cliff McGinnis.



## Rose Marie DeLeon

After high school, I attended several junior colleges then graduated with a degree from San Diego State University. With my first husband, we moved to the Bay Area. We bought a retail business and had a daughter.

Before my daughter was a year old, my husband and I separated. I moved with my daughter to Orange County.



After moving to Lancaster, CA, to accept a Management position with the State of California, I met my current husband Walt Rogers. Yes, I live with “Mr. Rogers”. He is a retired meteorologist and glider pilot. I have been retired for a while and have learned to tap dance with the Boogie Woogie Mamas. In addition to gliding, and tapping, we work on our house, travel and love to attend the theater to see musicals. My life in a pinto bean.



In Orange County as a single Mom, I learned to juggle. With the support of my family, I raised my daughter while working at a variety of jobs. Since I kept looking for jobs all the time, I became a

job counselor. I worked for several non-profits, training participants in job search skills then placing them in jobs. I maintained a very high rate placement. My last job was with the State of California as an Employment Program Manager in Lancaster.



Although I am not a kid person and we struggled, I enjoyed raising my daughter. She went to Catholic school because they had child care and later graduated from a Catholic High School. She went on the University of California, Santa Cruz. Today she lives in the Portland, OR area with her husband and my Grand puppies.

# Sydna Elrod

This essay by Class of 1965 Classmate Sydna Elrod was published in *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Think Possible—101 Stories about Using a Positive Attitude to Improve Your Life* in October 2015.



## A Treasure-Filled Life by Sydna Elrod

It was a hot August day, nineteen days after my fourth birthday, when my life changed dramatically. One day I was a lively, active little girl who rode a bike, dragged her little brother along on adventures, and loved riding horses. The next day I was falling every few steps and getting up only to stumble and fall again. For eleven months I was unable to breathe on my own, needing an iron lung to pump air in and out of my lungs. Whereas I had been active and independent, I became ninety percent dysfunctional, without the use of my limbs. Bathing, dressing, eating, and using the bathroom were no longer things I could do for myself. I am a survivor of the polio epidemic.

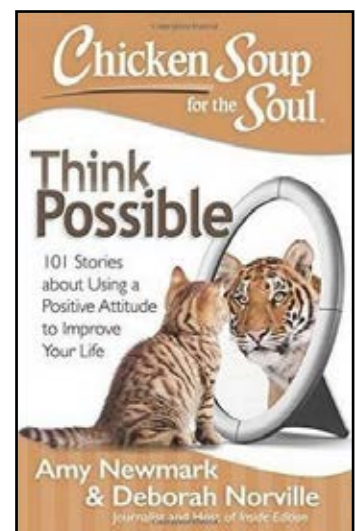
The following nine years were filled with surgeries on my hands, my legs, and my spine. I soon learned that much of life was about adapting. Each surgery required changes. I would write with my hands a certain way, and after the surgery I would need to find a new way. Once, during a prolonged stay in bed, my mother stuck a pencil in my mouth and encouraged me to write my algebra equations. I made it work.

As a teenager, I started thinking about what life could offer. Living independently, a career, marriage, children, travel? These became my dreams. I was a shy, quiet introvert and kept all of these images of victory close to my heart. I learned I needed to project an open, friendly, positive attitude toward others so they would get past my appearance as a young woman with a twisted torso, in leg braces, in a wheelchair. As time passed, I worked with myself to truly become that open, friendly, positive person.

I was active in high school, carrying a full academic load. As treasurer of the French club, I coordinated bake sales and dances. I went to basketball and football games and hung out with friends. My classmates pushed me to and from classes and events. Those blessed kids gave me legs, even on our senior trip to Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland. My first power wheelchair didn't arrive until I was in my early twenties and oh, how I loved the freedom!

I attended two years of college, my brother being my ride the first year and friends working out rides for me the second.

*Chicken Soup for the Soul: Think Possible*, Eds. Amy Newmark & Deborah Norville, Pub. by Chicken Soup for the Soul, Oct. 6, 2015, 416 pages. Sydna's essay is on p. 154.





Wheelchair Accessibility was not as available in those days. I acquired lots of friends—girls who were willing to hold my books and many good-looking guys who carried me up and down stairs.

One of my college friends received a job offer in Maryland and needed a live-in babysitter for her six- and eight-year-old children for the summer. I accepted the job, the kids and I had fun, and I stayed on. I have lived in Maryland ever since.

I qualified for a computer programming class for persons with severe disabilities, which included the opportunity to live in with full care provided. Without finger mobility and dexterity, I had to learn a way to type, so the school taught me to use a stick in my mouth. I have never won a typing contest, but I still type 14.5 words per minute!

In 1980, I was encouraged to enter the Miss Wheelchair Maryland beauty pageant. The pageant focused on women in wheelchairs who were accomplishing goals in their lives. I entered and won. Later, I went on to the Miss Wheelchair USA pageant.

The pageant afforded me many opportunities. I met government officials, made personal appearances at various disability-awareness events, and was invited to represent the pageant at the Pimlico Race Course. I had liked riding horses as a child, so visiting Pimlico and being up close and personal with two-thousand-pound racehorses was a dream come true. The pageant prizes included a set of Samsonite luggage that I still have, some money, and a clothes-shopping spree. It was wonderful for someone like me who would be out looking for a job soon.

Like many young people, I furnished my first apartment by shopping at Goodwill and

flea markets. My teachers gave me a set of wineglasses and groceries. It was Christmas time, and two classmates gave me their hand-me-down tree and ornaments. I still have one of those ornaments thirty-five years later.

My mother moved in with me while I searched for a job. Daily I would pore over the newspaper ads, and with a loaner typewriter my mother would type my application letters as I dictated them. A computer keyboard easily responded to my typing with a mouthstick, but this borrowed typewriter did not. To my delight, the Social Security Administration hired me. When asked if I had transportation, I replied affirmatively, even though I had no idea how I was going to travel back and forth to the job. I scrambled to pull rides together, soliciting the help of a cab driver who lived in my building. That sufficed as I waited for special transportation through the local bus service. Thus began my fourteen and a half years of service at the Social Security Administration.

Retired now, I have what I need to take care of my ninety-year-old mother and myself. I travel, enjoy Ravens football games, attend plays and concerts, and do anything else I set my mind to.

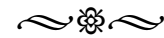
As a child, I wasn't supposed to live past my teens. Those innovative, painful surgeries I endured early in my life, and medical advances as I've aged, have enabled my lifespan to be extended. As I approach seventy, I am looking forward to many more years of quality living. My latest goal is to go on a cruise, and I can hardly wait for the ocean view, a stack of books, and, of course, more new friends.

It does not matter that I am in a wheelchair and need people to help me with life's details. What matters is that I have never

given up on my dreams. I have held onto them and believed they would come to pass, taking advantage of every opportunity that presented itself. No—I haven't married, but I have had many a gorgeous hunk carry me over the threshold. I haven't given birth to children, but I have enjoyed the antics, pouts and love of my friends' children. I attained an education, have enjoyed a career, and live independently. For

goodness' sake, I won a beauty pageant! I have ridden across the countryside on Christmas Eve and delivered baked goods and presents to my friends as if I were Santa Claus. I have gotten up every morning of my treasure-filled life and lived each day to the utmost.

If you never give up, you can achieve anything you set your mind to!



## Sharlene Vines Ricou

Hello Classmates!

This occasion is unbelievable! Never even thought about reaching this milestone. How nice of the dedicated committee who put this reunion together...thank you! Sadly, I won't be attending but certainly will be there in spirit.



What a great opportunity to reminisce and reflect on those tender years — so many memories came flooding back. I was eight years old when my family moved from LA to China Lake in 1955. What a big cultural change from where we lived (now Watts) — my dad attended USC so we lived close by! After graduation he thought he'd teach for a couple of years before completing his doctoral studies in law, so when offered a job in a little desert town in the middle of the desert he took it! As many of you had him for a teacher your senior year, you know that he so loved teaching that he decided to stay. He passed away in 1999 but all of you were in his thoughts through the years — always happy to run into former students and hear about the paths that they

chose.

When we arrived in China Lake, there was only temporary housing available, so while we waited for something more permanent, we lived in a little trailer in a park over by Viewig Elementary. I was enrolled there and met my first friend, Rose Marie DeLeon. Almost immediately, housing became available and I was transferred to Groves School where I met the many friends that remained through graduation and who will always have a special place in my heart — Karen, Patty, Bernie,



Sharlene (Vines) and Bob Ricou, taken in Alaska.



Kathy, Marilyn, Susie, Leslie and Jeanette. Later in 5th grade, Susan and Carole were my best friends through high school and were in my wedding. It was at Groves that Ronny Zills gave me the nickname of “stringbean” which later turned to “beanie”. I WAS a bit thin! We all went to Murray Junior High where we learned to dance in Mrs. McLean’s PE class, learned to put radios together in Mr. Brubaker’s science class and we girls learned to make aprons out of organdy, wore lipstick and heels for the first time (I chose the darkest red I could find — wanted to make sure it was noticed!). Fun times.



Bob, Jeff, Cristina and Sharlene, 2010.

High school!

Burroughs had moved just outside the gate and, as I remember, we had to use our passes to get back in after school. It was all so exciting but, regretfully, my dad was on the faculty so I had to watch everything I did and said because there were some teachers who made sure he even knew what mood I was in! He seemed to know everything about everything! My first REAL date was with Pete Pifer. I was a sophomore and he was a very nice senior. Turns out he had my dad for government and he asked him first! I found out later that he wasn’t the only one who did that! What?! Why?!

There are lots of memories of football games and dances after. Dates, dressing up for school every day in dresses with shoes and purses to match. A big highlight for me was when Tom Frisbee took me to see The Beach Boys, front row, center seats and on the way

home in his beautiful, black, old model T (or whatever it was), it had a problem. Amazingly, he chewed a piece of gum, stuck together whatever was broken and got me home by curfew. I was 16 and in love!

These were carefree, innocent times for me. But then, there were sobering times as well — the elation we all felt when President

Kennedy came to visit. We saw his plane fly over and then we all got up close and personal when we stood on the parade route to the Officer’s Club. So close. Then, tragically, we were all stunned when, several months later, he was killed. I remember that

day as if it were yesterday!

I met my husband, Bob Ricou, in Bakersfield when I came here to school in 1965. He was born and mostly raised here. He loves it so this is where we’ve remained. After spending so many years going to my family’s “second home” in Long Beach, this wasn’t my first choice to live but here I stayed. I worked for Pacific Bell for many years in various capacities until I had my children. I loved my years as stay-at-home mom. I was always available to participate in all their activities. I was then fortunate enough to work from home for an attorney friend in LA until my husband and I retired a couple years ago. We traveled a lot with our jobs — from Key West to Anchorage so now we’re just kicking back for a while. I spend a lot of time with my 87 year young mom. She lives very well, by herself, in a house she bought last summer, a short distance

from me but, since she had neck surgery, also last summer, she doesn't drive. I'm the only child, so she depends on me for quite a lot.

The years have been good to me. I, like most people these days, love to take photographs, restore old ones, love my computer and electronic devices (Steve Jobs' vision was awesome!), keep up with politics and just try to enjoy life. I have a sweet, little black cocker spaniel that is the love of my life. I've had a very stable life — some might say totally boring! I've been married for 49 years to the same person, two children, Jeff, 40, and Cristina, 33. Neither have married yet so no grandchildren. I don't miss what I don't have. To my parents dismay, I only achieved an associate degree from BC but, growing up with a teacher, I received the life long learning bug which I also passed on to my own children. My son chose broadcast news as his career, our daughter lives in San Francisco, specializing in corporate branding at an architectural/design firm there.

Have fun. I'll be thinking of you...

Sharlene



Christmas Dance double date 1964, Tom Frisbee, Sharlene Vines, Charlotte Blackmon and Tom's college friend.



Above: Sharlene Vines and Terry Hogue, Junior-Senior Prom, 1965.

Left: Janet Ritchey and Sharlene Viines hostess an event at the invitation of Stanley Vines and a couple of other cute guys in 1964.



# Kären Bjorklund Locklin



In the fall of 1965, I left China Lake to attend Stanford University. I survived freshman year (barely) and then in July 1966 as I was teaching swimming at the Officer's Club Pool, my mother and Gordon Draper

came together to tell me that my father, Russell Bjorklund, had passed away in Washington D.C. where he was on business for the base. That news rocked my family's world. In the next two months, my mother was able to get a full-time teaching job at Groves Street School, our family moved to a smaller house on Fowler Street, and I got a full scholarship to continue at Stanford. My father was my idol, but after his passing, my mother became my idol, too. She continued teaching at Groves Street School and after retirement worked as a volunteer aide for an additional ten years. She saw her four children all graduate from college and graduate school. She witnessed all four children marry wonderful spouses. And she enjoyed being a grandmother to six beautiful grandchildren. Sadly, we lost her in 2004.

After graduating in 1969, I wasn't ready to leave Stanford, so I spent a year as a graduate at large taking economics classes and then a year working for the Office of the President on Affirmative Action for Women. When I finally left Stanford in 1971, I headed south to Los Angeles where I attended UCLA Graduate School of Management. With an MBA, I started a career in real estate development and

banking. My husband, Bill, and I met in Marina del Rey and married in 1979. When our sons, Kevin and Matthew, were ready for school, we were ready to get out of the big city. We moved to Temecula, CA where Bill continued his financial planning practice and I got to be a full-time mom and volunteer.



Our boys grew up, and sixteen years ago, I became the Chief Operating Officer of The Planners Network, Inc., a group of 70 independently owned financial planning practices throughout the country. Our son, Kevin, earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from USC in Computer Science/Computer Engineering and while working for Boeing he earned an MBA at UC Irvine. Kevin married his high school girlfriend, Lisa, and after ten years with Boeing, he and Lisa



My mother, Beth Bjorklund, and clockwise from top: grandchildren Peter Bjorklund, Matthew Locklin, Kevin Locklin, Elizabeth Bjorklund, Colin O'Keefe, and Ian O'Keefe.

moved to Temecula where Kevin is now Bill's partner in Locklin Financial Group. Happily, Kevin and Lisa have also given us our three granddaughters! Son, Matthew, earned his Bachelor's degree in Viticulture and Enology from UC Davis and did his graduate work working wine harvests in Napa Valley, New Zealand, and Italy. He has worked at Justin Winery in Paso Robles for eight years and is currently the Assistant Wine Maker. We are looking forward to Matt's marriage to Jessica Morrill in May in Paso Robles.

Bill and I are as busy as ever. Where we used to spend all our spare time coaching and watching the boys play football, baseball, basketball, and soccer and participating in school events, we now devote more time to our favorite non-profit groups and keep busy with family events. And, of course, we are both still working full-time.

I always say that China Lake provided such a unique place to grow up and I cherish the life-long friends I have and all the memories of a happy childhood in the desert.



Left: 1965 El Burro staff, Kären Bjorklund, Editor Staff (not in photo order): Ronald Aaron, Cindy Baker, Tandee Barnett, Mary Lou Becker, Michael Bradley, Katherine Byrd, Doris Christopher, Con Clark, Rose Marie DeLeon, Sandra Doucette, Caren Griffin, John Licwinko, Mary Meyer, Maunette Rictor, Cynthia Riggs, Cherly Robertson, Deborah Speciale, Susan Studer, Margaret Winter.



My family at Kevin and Lisa's wedding in 2007: Left to right: Brother-in-law Michael O'Keefe, sister Kristen, nephews Ian and Colin O'Keefe, brother-in-law Ivor Young, sister Linda, Bill, Lisa, Kevin, Kären, sister-in-law Beth Bjorklund, brother Eric, niece Elizabeth, and nephew Peter Bjorklund.



Granddaughter Remy Locklin, Jessica and Matt, Kevin, Lisa, granddaughters Phoebe and Chloe, Bill and Kären. Christmas 2015.



# Graduation June 11, 1965



Sharlene Vines, Carol LaCombe, Susan Nelligan and Elizabeth Heinz after the graduation ceremony.



Burroughs Principal Kenneth Wescott speaks at the graduation ceremony.

# Charlotte Blackmon Collins

After graduation from BHS, I attended UC Riverside for one year; I married and moved to Spokane, WA with my husband; we both attended Whitworth College. Our son, Michael, was born in Spokane. My husband graduated 2 years later.



We moved to Pasadena, CA and my husband started grad school. My daughter, Tiffany, was born in 1971. I continued school at Pasadena City College and graduated with an A.A. in Humanities in 1974 and we divorced. I was single for the next 22 years.

I transferred to Calstate LA and graduated with a B.A. in American Studies in 1978; it took me 13 years to get my B.A.!

From 1978 to 1982, I worked in media relations for the travel industry in Miami and San Francisco. In 1982, I returned to Southern California to work for the L.A. Times. I started teaching news writing in 1982 at Columbia College of Film and TV in Hollywood.

In 1984, my daughter, age 13 had surgery for a brain tumor; after that she lived with grand mal seizures and increasing mental and physical disabilities. I had to be very creative in developing a work life that was flexible and paid me enough to care for her and us; and to put my son through college.

In 1985, I started teaching business writing at several local community colleges. I gradually

turned my courses into a training consultancy through which I conducted writing and speaking classes for employees

of County of Los Angeles departments, banks, insurance companies and Fortune 500 companies, until 1999. This work paid very well and allowed me a lot of time to take care of my daughter.

In 1982, I got involved in Public Access Cable TV; I learned video and TV production and produced three talk shows and a number of documentaries over the next 10 years.

In 1991 my son married; in 1993 he graduated from CalState LA with a B.A. in Anthropology and went to work in quality



Selfie of Charlotte & Clyde in Ridgecrest on an evening walk in fall.

assurance in a bio-med lab. In recent years he got another B.A. in Information Technology and works in IT for Beckman Coulter, a manufacturer of biomedical laboratory equipment. My daughter-in-law, Veronique, is a licensed clinical psychologist; she worked for most of the last 15 years for L.A. County



Toasting the New Year Southern California style in my son's hot tub: front: daughter-in-law Veronique, granddaughters Valerie & Miranda; back: step-son Mac, my son Michael; green crown in rear: grandson Jeremy.





Selfie with the grandchildren at LA County Museum of Art, a favorite destination since they were little kids.

Dept. of Health; she recently went into private practice. Veronique's family is French.

My first grandchild Jeremy came along; he is now almost 21 and will graduate this year from UC San Diego in biology. My elder granddaughter Miranda, 19, is a freshman at Seattle University, studying digital arts. My younger granddaughter, Valerie, born in Y2K, is almost 16 and a sophomore in high school. She is a long distance track athlete. She is gifted in math and science and may go to UC San Diego, following in her brother's footsteps.

In 1995, I met my husband Clyde Collins. After he proposed, I had to go into therapy—I was terrified of marrying again. Therapy worked. We were married in 1996. On Summer Solstice this year, we will have been married 20 (mostly) happy years☺

My husband Clyde has a Ph.D. in Mathematics from Indiana University; like many in mathematics, he worked most of his career in software development: for Starbase, Borland, and Yahoo! Now retired, he is an online film and music reviewer, has some 2000 Twitter followers and is active in several Google communities.

I also have two other sons, who are Clyde's sons, Mac and James Collins. Living

in Missouri, they stayed with us several weeks every year until adulthood and are now 25 and 21. Mac, who is a software engineer in San Antonio, is getting married in June to Yenmi Tang, the daughter of Vietnamese immigrants. Yenmi will go to law school in the fall, 2016. James studies Physical Training and Business.

In 2001, I completed an M.A. in Media Studies. I purchased equipment to set up my own video production studio. I have made many documentary, educational and political video projects over the years.

From 2001-2008, I was an Adjunct Lecturer at UC Irvine, teaching academic writing. After heart surgery, I wanted to leave teaching and training altogether. I studied digital media and graphic arts; I worked for 2 years at JPL in Pasadena, curating and maintaining an internal website for NASA; after that, I started a business in web hosting and development which I am still doing.

In 2014, my daughter passed away suddenly, but not unexpectedly. Her brain was damaged by the radiation treatments she received following brain surgery at 13. She was nearly 43 when she died. I was devastated. Still am, but it's better. I'm writing a book about raising a child with disabilities.

In September 2014, Clyde and I moved to Ridgecrest, CA to live with and care for my aging and sick mother. The jury's still out on how I feel about being back here. The sky is beautiful. There's plenty of parking.

And I've really enjoyed working on our 50th Reunion!



My daughter Tiffany in her sassy purple cowgirl hat.

# Photos



Carolyn (Turner) Fleming and Karen (Curl) Garamond.



Donna (Brunton) & Ken Smith



Eileen Brunson and son Taylor



Linda (Bauer) Bauval and son Max



Ray & Leslee (Allen) Kinnamon, son-in-law Grant, daughter Kerry.



Jerry & Lori Hixson



# Photos



Mike and Connie Williams



Dave and Paulette (Bauer) Falco



Bob & Patty (Gonzales) Foote



Daughter Jessica & Patty (Gonzales) Foote



Roy and Lorraine Randolph



Rex and Roy Randolph

# Photos



Tom and Catherine Allen



Joseph and Mary Barber, with Parker.



Bill Treadwell



1965-65 Main's Playgirls Basketball Team. Back row LtoR: Carolyn Turner, Mary Meyer, Coach Maine, Harriet Stone, Linda Bauer, Sharon McLean. Front row LtoR: (?), Tande Barnett, Pat Hennessy, Darlene Coslett, Judy M ?



# Memories, Dreams, Refractions

## Musings (Confessions) of Growing Up as a Desert Rat



By Glenn Pritchard  
Burroughs High School  
Class of 1965

### *1959. Tiny's.*

Tiny's had the best burgers in Kern County or so the legend goes. James Monroe students congregated there, especially on weekends. One wooden outdoor chair that had been repeatedly victimized by unknown assailants seemed ripe for carving personal initials. It didn't take the owners long to identify the culprit (think personal initials!). To this day I don't remember what made the burgers taste so great, but I'll always remember Tiny giving me the opportunity to refine my sand papering and painting skills that year.

### *1960. Sophie's.*

Sophie's had the most economical meal in town. You could order a large plate of refried beans accompanied by two tortillas and a coke—all for a quarter. This was an ideal lunch for James Monroe students who were always on the prowl for inexpensive food. Whether it was a healthy meal is debatable.

*1959 - 1961.*

*James Monroe Junior High School.*

Never tempt a teacher with an incredible reputation as a disciplinarian. Specifically, never skip Mr. Brewer's class and hide out in the baseball observation tower where there is only one way up and down. A patient teacher on the ground will wait you out. Whatever possessed four of us (all boys, duh!) at James Monroe to think we could get away with this insane action is a faded memory. What hasn't faded is a personal and intimate memory of Mr. Brewer's infamous whiffle-paddle, used to instill maximum appreciation for class attendance. I'm sure that paddle has been enshrined somewhere.

### *1962. China Lake Theater.*

How could you not enjoy a Saturday matinée for 10 cents, supplemented by a coke for 10 cents and a candy bar for 5 cents. Spending just a quarter for a teenager's afternoon entertainment was a parent's dream. I have fond memories of this theater not because I entertained a girlfriend for the first time (which I did), but because it was the home of my first job. Through a contracting arrangement, I helped clean the theater after the Friday night, Saturday matinée and Saturday evening movies. The experience was bittersweet. It was my first exhilarating experience with earned income, but my first depressing encounter with taxes.

### ***1961 - 1965. Burroughs High School.***

There is an overused saying that perception is reality. There was always a rivalry between China Lake and Ridgecrest junior high schools, especially in sports which by their very nature are competitive. Once at Burroughs, though, we began to quickly realize that the opposition didn't have "warts" after all. I fondly remember a high school classmate telling me that in junior high cross-town competitions, she used to call me Mean Old Number Seven (which was my jersey number in basketball.) Thank heavens Burroughs fostered an environment where reality was allowed to overcome misperception.

Disagreements happened at Burroughs, whether in class or on the practice field. I laugh now about an archaic coach named Mr. Tysel, who used antiquated methods in the upper room of the gym to resolve heated differences. Boxing gloves, extremely cumbersome and heavy, were fitted on the two warring combatants while the rest of the athletes encircled them to define the boundary. Invariably, after a few minutes, utter exhaustion took hold and a satisfactory resolution came quickly thereafter - usually laughter. No one was ever really physically hurt in this process (pride is a different matter) and many afterward couldn't even remember the original point of contention. As an adult, I better understand and appreciate the activity that took place in that room. If memory serves me well, I had to wear those ugly gloves on just one occasion.

Every teacher needs a secret weapon; a go-to technique that ensures stability

in the classroom. Mr. Crowder's weapon was a wandering eye (not in a moral or ethical sense). He was able to direct his full attention to the far left side of the classroom with his "good" eye, while simultaneously using his wandering eye to carefully search for any misbehavior on the far right. His uncanny accuracy and quickness in detecting misbehavior became stuff of legends.

Mr. Rambis was a no nonsense disciplinarian when it came to class misbehavior. His go-to technique involved the threatened use of tape. To this day I can vividly recall a situation where an unruly student called his "bluff" and was taped around the mouth and hands. Things were different in the 1960s. Rules had to be followed or you suffered (sometimes severely) the consequences of your actions. After that eye opener, I never again witnessed a student challenging the resolve of Mr. Rambis.

Mr. Dennler was a teacher and, as a student, there was no fraternization with the enemy. On one occasion, however, he graciously volunteered to take four of us in his personal car to an away Burroughs football game. During the trip we laughed as a unified group, told stories as a unified group, and got adult advice about a lot of things, including girls and women. When Monday arrived, it was back to the status quo. I never again had an opportunity to freely socialize with Mr. Dennler, but I will always remember that particular trip. I came away with several "bizarre" notions. Teachers are normal people with normal wants and needs. Teachers know a lot of things. Teachers can be cool if given a chance.



## ***1965. The Only Constant is Change.***

Four years at Burroughs passed seemingly in the blink of an eye. Then, lives changed. Circumstances changed. Universities opened their doors for some. Uncle Sam selected others. An unpopular war raged unabated. People lived and people died. Old friends were lost and new friends were gained. I remember the late 60s as being a tumultuous time.

Looking back, I appreciate how seemingly calm, carefree and fun our lives in the early 1960s were, especially compared to the world today. Life isn't fair and we can't return to that serenity. Here we are 50 years later and some would argue that we are in the twilight of our existence. I continue to tell myself, don't blink or you might miss something really important.



## **Rollin' on the River**

By Glenn Pritchard

Burroughs High School, Class of 1965

Sometimes taking the road less traveled isn't always a road. Sometimes it's a river. I fondly recollect the summertime joy of riding automobile inner tubes on the Kern River with high school friends, starting below Johnsondale and ending at Kernville or beginning at Kernville and terminating at Lake Isabella. On several occasions, when we felt particularly adventuresome, we would tackle the arduous all-day trip from just below Johnsondale all the way to Lake Isabella.

Once in Kernville, we always started the day inflating the inner tubes with air and loading them into the back of a pickup truck. One of us sat in the highly coveted shot-gun position, while another sat spread eagle around the centrally-located manual gear shift. The rest of us hopped into the bed of the pickup with the unenviable task of holding down the tubes while traveling faster than we should up a winding mountain road. None of us used seat belts. Back then, we were invincible. Looking down on the sinuous river to our left reminded us that we had successfully accomplished this mission numerous times over our lengthy and storied careers as teenagers. We were unafraid and excited. Once liberated from the truck, each of us carefully chose the special tube that would safely carry us to glory. Effective sunscreen was non-existent in the early 60s, but we zealously applied a dollop of zinc oxide on our noses. It's ironic that our bodies could be acceptably sunburned, but our noses had to be protected at all costs.

The Kern River is best navigated by letting the twists and turns control your destiny. It's futile to fight the inexorable downstream pull of the current. The fun is achieved by experiencing the sudden and random bumps and ricochets caused by the surrounding rocks, the variable speeds of the flowing river, and the exhilarating challenge of maintaining proper balance to stay afloat. The cardinal rule was to stay in the tube. Past experience dictated that if you and the tube were separated, the odds of reestablishing contact were small and achieving glory even smaller.

On each trip we collectively paid for gas. Individual diets, however, were decided

by personal net worth. I relished a breakfast donut at the local bakery, a lunchtime chili dog and the finest of evening cuisine, a juicy cheeseburger (Gluten-free products be damned.) Pint-sized public restrooms ensured us inexpensive daily hygiene.

After a day immersed in the local beauty of a river ride, we celebrated. We watched the sun begin its inevitable disappearing act while the sky transformed from azure blue to fire orange and finally to pastel pink. As always, twilight was the end result. Our night was spent under the starlight in down-filled sleeping bags, warmed by a raging fire and surrounded by the best of high school buddies. Conversations swung effortlessly between sports and girls, punctuated occasionally with little white lies about the girls. Oh, those girls! They were never far from our minds.

At the conclusion of the weekend, and home safely in Ridgecrest, I savored the memories of the river ride from the comfort of my own room. It was the most sought-after and fascinating destination for a teenager like me. Paradise is personal. Unforgettable moments can be found anywhere and everywhere - like the simple joy of riding an inner tube on a river.



Square dancing at Vieweg, 1958-59.



Flagpole at Murray Jr.High, 1959-60.



Murray Jr. High 8th Grade swim party  
at the base pool, 1961.



## USNOTS

By Sukey Kielman Briggs

Sixty-seven years ago, one year after the end of WWII and the beginning of the Boomer Generation, I was born on the Mojave Desert. I'm a woman of the desert, an ecosystem of never-ending sky, searing secrets and icy deception. Those who call the desert home live lives of communion with solitude and illusion; it's the nature of the environment.

In 1943, this particular chunk of desert was selected by the US government for its superb isolation. It was and is, literally, in the middle of nowhere. You can't pass through it without going to it. Shortly before the end of WWII, it was classified in Washington as USNOTS, an acronym that said a lot with few letters. USNOTS was officially the United States Naval Ordnance Test Station, a name that changed with the political tide, but was always an acronym. Today it's China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, NAWS, a national research and development brain drain. In the mid '40s, it was an undercover, international center for military gray matter. NOTS, as the locals referred to it at that time, put the nose on the A Bomb. A dubious distinction, but since the base itself was invisible, distinction wasn't an option.

At the age of 12, I needed a plastic pass to get on and off the base. A high chain-link fence separated the base from the dusty merchants who served the women and children living on the right side of The Fence. A guard station housed an armed guard who checked the passes of those entering and leaving--saluting

us through. 'What You See Here, What You Do Here, What You Hear Here, When You Leave Here, Let It Stay Here' was lettered in bold black on a huge white sign as we left the base. This was the military equivalent of the Ten Commandments.



Sukey Kielman Briggs

But I wasn't a military brat. Nor were my buddies. Our fathers were big-brain civilians, imported to concoct weapons of mass destruction long before the term existed. None of us kids had an inkling as to what our daddies did. We knew when the whistle blew at 7:30 a.m. that our fathers went to work; when the whistle blew at 11:30 they came home to lunch; when the third whistle blew at 4:30 p.m. the work day officially ended, which was not the same as Father Knows Best coming home for the day. Much later I'd think of this daily routine as a paradise for Asperger Syndrome. But when I was a kid, men worked, women cooked and cleaned and often drank themselves into invisibility, and kids hunted horny toads, ran amok on hot sand, and shared comic books and dirty stories indoors when sand storms threatened to rip skin from flesh.

This was my 'normal'. I didn't question it. I didn't question the alcoholic, pedophilic priests who taught at my Catholic School on the wrong side of The Fence, I didn't question my mother's longing for community. Instead

I read. Everything. The base's library, not surprisingly, was a mecca of intellectual and literary opportunity. And the personal libraries of the parents I baby-sat for were meccas of secreted smut: *Fanny Hill* and *Story of O* took some time to unearth, but the dig was productive.

The cost of this odd upbringing on my particular soul was withdrawal. My outer world was too hot, too cold, too cognitively monochromatic. My inner world was vibrant, creative, sexual, fueled by DH Lawrence, Henry Miller, Anais Nin, Lawrence Durrell, JD Salinger. I marginally did as I was told, and what no one saw, no one questioned. My intellect was bright, but inwardly messy.

This sloppiness was reinforced in the late '60s, when my Pasadena City College peers questioned and challenged everything, torched clichés, and created realities as hermetic as sieves. As women we rebelled against the patriarchy, but having no model outside the Old Boys' Club, we fought for professional equality not day-care centers. We ceded maternity for positions of corporate power. We redefined our new chemically-controlled sexuality as recreation--impersonal rather than connective. Two steps forward, one step back.

Way back, then... Now the past defines a present of Boomers researching care facilities for aged (if still extant) parents, retirement housing (increasingly near offspring), financial options or financial oblivion, and the never-ending organ recitals: Body Parts R Us.

We have not become our parents. Those of

us raised on the Mojave Desert and educated at Sherman E Burroughs High School in the mid-'60s are a unique tribe. We cut our teeth on imported culture and sequestered knowledge, then we exited into the larger world of cultural chaos. Some of us exited in a larger sense in Viet Nam or into the shadowland of PTSD or drugs. Some of us became 'Firsts'--women usurping positions of male power; men changing diapers as house husbands. We bonded, cliqued, and evolved into the 11th hour of global transition. We are now the elders during the Sixth Extinction: U SNOTS, running out of Kleenex, facing the next Great Unknown.

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# Growing up in China Lake: Three Stories

by Charlotte Blackmon Collins

## 1. THE CAPTAIN'S LAWN

The town where I grew up was not really a town at all. It was a U.S. Naval weapons research and test base in the Mojave Desert, northeast of Los Angeles 150 miles. Its name has been changed once or twice over the years since I moved away, perhaps due to changes in the politics of weapons building, but when I lived there between the ages of four and seventeen from 1952 to 1965, it was called NOTS China Lake, for Naval Ordnance Test Station (at) China Lake. The "Lake" part of the name was said to derive from the great dry salt lake bed that lies north of the base, and the "China" part of the name from the fact that many Chinese immigrant laborers died there during construction of the railroad in the 1800's.

The housing and shopping sector of the base was laid out in a grid pattern at the north end of the Indian Wells Valley. All the streets were named after U.S. Naval admirals, like Blandy, Lauritsen, Grove and Rodman or after Naval aircraft carriers, like Langley, Essex, Wasp and Nimitz. This part of the base was oriented toward the east where the topography rose to form a small mountain, called "B" mountain where a big white letter B was repainted each year by the freshmen class of the local high school, Sherman E. Burroughs High, named for the first Captain of the base when it was established in 1943. As Blandy Avenue rose eastward toward "B Mountain," a section of the community was created by an increased elevation of perhaps ten or maybe

even twenty feet, and was unofficially named "The Hill." On the Hill were located the residences assigned as living-quarters for the elite of the base, the civilian base administrator and other high level managers and their families, the highest ranking officers and their families, and the Captain of the base. The Hill was ringed by Essex Circle, and as Blandy Avenue approached it from the west, on the leading edge of Essex Circle, stood the Officers' Club. Proceeding to the right around Essex Circle so that it was positioned directly behind the Officers' Club lay the Captain's residence. Between the Officer's Club and the Captain's residence stretched a green expanse of well-water and manicured lawn, edged on either side like an Apian Way by tall poplar trees. This was the Captain's Lawn.

In the summer of 1964, the summer between my junior and senior high school years, my afternoons and evenings were spent at the swimming pool behind the Officer's Club. Most of the residents of the base were civilian scientists and engineers and their families. My father was an engineer with a high enough GS rating for our family to have membership in the Officer's Club, and most importantly, summer time pool privileges. This was a very good thing for me and my little brother and sister because we could spend the 115-degree afternoons splashing in the pool and consuming delicious grilled hot dogs and hamburgers, ice cream sandwiches, sodas and potato chips from the snack bar, while the best rock and roll of the early 1960's played over the loud speakers. Tanned as brown as a berry, a "surfer-girl" bleached blonde, trim and fit in my Jantzen one-piece, I was a very cool sixteen year old.

My favorite guy of that moment was

a recently graduated senior named Jimmy who was bound for college in the fall. Jimmy was also a buff lifeguard at the Officer's Club swimming pool. He was tan and blonde, gorgeous, but also a very nice boy. Jimmy and I began to date. I remember clearly only one of those dates, the one where we ended up on the Captain's Lawn in the moonlight.

That Saturday night, we had gone to the 10-cent movie at the base theater, then up to the Club pool for a coke, but eventually we wandered out through the parking lot, up onto the Captain's lawn. The moon was bright, so bright that the tall poplars gave shade, and we sat down on the sweet-smelling grass in the moonlit shade so as not to be spotted by base security patrolling in their gray American-made trucks. We started necking, as we called it then. Jimmy's kisses were very wet and eager. I lay back in the grass and looked up at the zillion stars that you could see back then in the desert's night sky. Jimmy lay beside me and pulled me close to face him. He didn't touch me except to wrap his arms around me and press his mouth to mine. He held me tighter and tighter and moved his body against me. But suddenly he pulled away and sat up. I had no idea what had happened. I was quite experienced with necking but with little beyond that. After an exasperated sigh he said, "You are burning my butt up and act like you don't care at all."

I don't know how I knew—but I knew what he meant. He meant that he was getting really "worked up" but my behavior told him that I was not "worked up." That was true. I was not at all sexually aroused. I had no notion of what it meant to be sexually aroused. But somehow I did get it that I was supposed to act like I was sexually aroused in order to please

him, and somehow, I knew how to act like I was aroused. So after that, for the rest of the summer, whenever we necked, I faked being worked up. He never pressed for more than that, and we went our separate ways at the end of summer.

I sometimes think about the Captain's Lawn. It was one of the many intense sensory experiences of living on the desert where the nights in summer were magical. In near silence, a bone-dry breeze cooled the 95-degree midnight air as an ocean of stars winked overhead, dense as sand on a beach. The moon whether waxing, waning or full, poured velvety light over the landscape. The grass was thick and dry enough to lie in, and the smells of freshly mown grass and earth filled every breath. The Captain's Lawn was always freshly mown at the height of the Cold War when there was plenty of water and plenty of money and Monsanto kept the grass free of weeds and bugs. We could be romantic, self-indulgent and virginal for that moment.

## 2. SWABBIES

Mother always said, I was a sneaky child. By that I think she meant I was never openly defiant. Instead, I listened obediently to her, then quietly proceeded to do exactly what I wanted to do. I probably had a model of this in my father since he didn't mind her either and only rarely confronted her head on. For example, after Mother went to bed at night, Daddy often stayed up watching 1950's black and white television programs like Bonanza. I would creep down the hallway and stand at the edge of the living room and watch television with him. He knew I was there, but never sent me back to bed. We seemed to share in this



small act some sort of conspiratorial motive to resist my mother's controlling influence in the household. But one thing Daddy and Mother did agree on, as I became a teenager, was that I was forbidden to have anything to do with sailors, or "swabbies" as they were referred to by civilians at China Lake.

As you might imagine, men in uniform caught my attention at an early age. They were everywhere, of course. China Lake was a U.S. Naval base. All that masculinity. All those fit young men who walked with straight backs and shoulders, heads high, as though perpetually marching on parade. All that testosterone. It was heady. Around the ages of 12 or 13, I was allowed to ride my bicycle all the way to Bennington Plaza, the central shopping complex of the base, a mile and a half from our house on the corner of Rodman and Langley. Bennington Plaza, a little strip mall, an L-shape of shops and stores around a large parking lot, it contained at the east end Barber and Beauty Shops, a Cobbler Shop and Commissary Store, a supermarket where we could buy fresh and packaged foods; the Navy Exchange, or PX, where we could buy everything else from hair dryers and toasters to diamond rings, Frankie Avalon's latest 45 and Seventeen Magazine; there was a small library where I was allowed to meet my best friend Karen to study. In the middle of the strip mall was the Maltshop, a small café. At the west end of the Plaza was the base indoor swimming pool and a gymnasium with a full sized basketball court. The central feature of this structure, however, was the base theater, a huge theater where live entertainment was regularly performed but movies shown most evenings for only 10 cents. All of these places were crawling with sailors.

I don't remember how the plan was hatched. One particular winter evening, when Karen and I were both 14, possibly because our mothers trusted us, we were able to devise a ruse. Actually, what our individual mothers trusted was the other girl's mother—that is, Karen's mother trusted my mother and my mother trusted Karen's mother. They did trust us as well because we'd never done anything like this before. Karen and I frequently went together to the "show," what we called the movies. One parent would drop us off at the base theater and the other parent would pick us up. We had set this up ourselves since eighth grade when we first met in Mrs. Weightman's homeroom at Murray Jr. High. By the time we were sophomores in high school, our parents didn't have to speak to each other about it. So we decided to have my dad drop us off at the show and to tell Karen's parents that my mother was picking us up. At the same time, we planned to tell my parents that Karen's parents were picking us up. In fact, we had no plan at all for getting home.

The reason for the ruse was to have some time after the show to hang out in front of the theater to talk to the swabbies, or rather, a particular swabbie, whom we had met at the library during the week, and his buddy. That particular swabbie was Jerry Langford from Memphis, Tennessee. A southern boy of 18 with a slightly pimply face, a soft drawl and those impossibly straight shoulders. During the workday, the sailors' uniform consisted of blue denim dungarees, a blue cotton work shirt and a white sailors cap. For special occasions and parades, they turned out all in their Whites, white bell-bottom trousers, a tight-fitting white pullover with square sailor collar, trimmed in navy blue striping, and

again the white sailor cap. In the evenings when the swabbies filled the back rows of the huge base theater, they were dressed in their civies, civilian slacks and shirts like any young men of the era except for the particular way in which they filled out those shirts with broad, muscular chests. And passing through them was like moving through an ocean of aromatic aftershave. These freshly showered and shaved young men, bursting with masculinity and scented with Old Spice, eyed the high-school girls as we moved by them, hoping for a return glance. So Karen and I wanted to linger in this forest of “real men.”

I’m sure we had no aims beyond this. But whatever our vague expectations, they were soon thwarted. After the movie let out, as we leaned on the cement pillars outside with Jerry Langford from Memphis and his several buddies, all of them telling us they were soon shipping out to Vietnam, I saw out of the corner of my eye my mother’s 1963 Nash Rambler screaming around the corner and bounding into the parking lot toward us. The walkway lights were going off since it was already 10:30 at night. I saw both my parents were in the car together.

My father stepped out the driver’s side and shouted, “Charlotte!”

The huddle of young men parted silently to let us through. Karen and I scurried to my parents’ waiting car, the headlights still on, the engine running. We drove in silence to Karen’s house where we dropped her off. Later at home, my mother was too angry to speak to me. She sent my father to my room to reprimand me. My dad’s approach was always to be soft-spoken, rational and kind. But this time he seemed shaken and had difficulty explaining the danger we had put ourselves in.

The only thing he was able to say to me was, “These boys are away from home. They can do whatever they want.” Some of what he was trying to say, beyond his words, reached me. He was telling me there was a danger having to do with that maleness and testosterone I was so drawn to. I knew he was giving me a warning and a caution.

He had been a young sailor in the Philippines during the war. I had seen a photo album he kept of himself with an array of young native women. He had been on the male side of such experiences. He knew what those swabbies were thinking. Looking back, I know he was fearful and frustrated. He was powerless to keep me safe from the dangers that men pose to women. I know he loved me, but he would never understand that he had been a contributor to the overall problem that I faced then and would face for the rest of my life.

### 3. THE BOHEMIANS

I have long credited my eleventh grade U.S. history teacher, Mr. Jim Thixton, with teaching me “how to think.” He taught his class unlike any other public school history class I had until I went to college. His teaching methodology might have been called Socratic, in which he described a scenario from a historical period of American history and asked the class questions that burrowed into the rationality—or more often, the irrationality—of the U.S. Government’s actions. What I believe he actually taught me was how to think like a “liberal.”

Mr. Thixton was a short man with thinning dark hair, perhaps in his early forties. I was 16 and at that age it was hard for me to guess the age of adults. I remember him



typically wearing slacks, open-collar front button shirts and a brown and tan tweed sports coat with leather buttons on the sleeves. He looked casual and professorial, informal but authoritative. Although he was still a young man, he walked with a slow gait around the high school campus, his jacket open and one hand thrust into his slacks pocket where he jangled keys or change. He ambled as though there were nothing in the world worth hurrying for. His style of dress was in contrast to other teachers like Mr. Rizer in English, Mr. Sanford in Math, and Mr. Volmer, the photography teacher, all of whom wore chinos and front-button short sleeved shirts, no doubt much more comfortable in the desert climate of Ridgecrest, California.

In class Mr. Thixton also told stories from his own life. The most cinematic image I recall was the one that described him riding through Mobile, Alabama on a motorcycle in the middle of the night in the pouring rain. I visualized him wearing leather. Mr. Thixton had lived an exciting life. I don't know where he was from but he had a slight Southern accent, as though he was from a northerly Southern state such as Missouri. I don't remember hearing where he was actually from. But one other memorable quote of his, which was meant as a political critique but was not, it turned out, an accurate prediction, was, "The U.S. will never have a president who speaks with a Southern accent." In fact, within two months, on November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy would be assassinated and Vice President Lydon B. Johnson from Texas would be sworn in to finish JFK's term and was re-elected for a full term in 1964.

Another of Mr. Thixton's memorable comments was, "Don't pinch Miss Bennett's

butt!" Miss Bennett was the cute, sexy, blonde home economics teacher who taught in a classroom down the hall from our history class. One day in class, Mr. Thixton announced that he would be absent on one of the coming days of the week and that Miss Bennett would be our substitute teacher. After he had briefly explained this, he added, "Don't pinch Miss Bennett's butt!" I wondered whether there was a flirtation going on between them.

Mr. Thixton had a beautiful wife named Marilyn who was a music teacher at Murray Junior High School. Mrs. Thixton was perhaps an inch or two taller than her husband, or she may have just appeared taller because her posture was better. She was slim and shapely, had long, naturally red hair, white, white skin and a few freckles that enhanced rather than detracted from her beauty. In seventh and eighth grade at Murray Jr. High, I had been a student in Mrs. Thixton's choral classes. She always wore her hair up in a sort of loose twist, pinned in such a way that it always looked as if it were going to tumble down while she was vigorously playing the classroom's upright piano, while also conducting the chorus. I'm not sure I knew what the word meant when I got to know them both while I was in high school, but I thought of Mr. and Mrs. Thixton as "Bohemian."

I got to know them outside of school because I babysat their three children who were named for figures from Norse mythology: Eric, Freya and Lec Hagan. The children's names fit their temperaments. They were not mischievous kids but they seemed used to living with very little structure, rules or discipline. Usually, when Mr. Thixton picked me up for a babysitting evening, the children were already fed their dinner so I only had

to keep them from leaving the house in their pajamas and to get them into bed at some time before midnight. The three of them seemed to entertain each other, playing together without any fighting, but they were boisterous and especially liked to jump on all the beds in the house.

After I got the three kids settled into their own beds, somewhere between nine and ten o'clock, then my own fun began. Mr. and Mrs. Thixton possessed a thrilling library of books, the likes of which I'd never seen in either the base nor school libraries and certainly not in my own home. My mother thought books cluttered and collected dust. She preferred a décor modeled on the Montgomery Ward catalog. My dad had a lot of books, mostly westerns and engineering books that were kept in my parents bedroom or in the hall closet of our house on Rodman Street. If Dad had books on more "informative" topics, I never saw them. My parents grew up in the South in a very restrictive, fundamentalist church environment. When they moved to California in 1952, they jettisoned all that. As a result, they thought that just about anything in print might be worth reading. They never signaled that any book on any topic was "immoral" or bad in any way. At best, my dad believed I would sort it out for myself. By contrast, my girlfriend's parents not only policed her choices of reading material, her mother checked out *A Summer Place* from the base library and burned it, acting as a censor for all the library patrons on the base.

In the Thixton's small pre-fab duplex on the base, brick and board bookcases lined the walls of most of the rooms. Specifically, their library contained a full shelf or more of books on sex. Many with diagrams! It was in

the Thixton library that I furthered my sex education. It was in their library that I first learned about homosexuality in a book by a psychiatrist on the subject of mental illness. The author's brave contention for that era was that homosexuality was not a mental illness. That book did not spell out what the sexual act between homosexuals would entail but it introduced me to the more important prevailing viewpoint that it was thought of as a sickness and that there was at least one differing opinion on the question. This was consistent with what I was learning in the classroom with Mr. Thixton—that questioning prevailing opinions is a good thing.

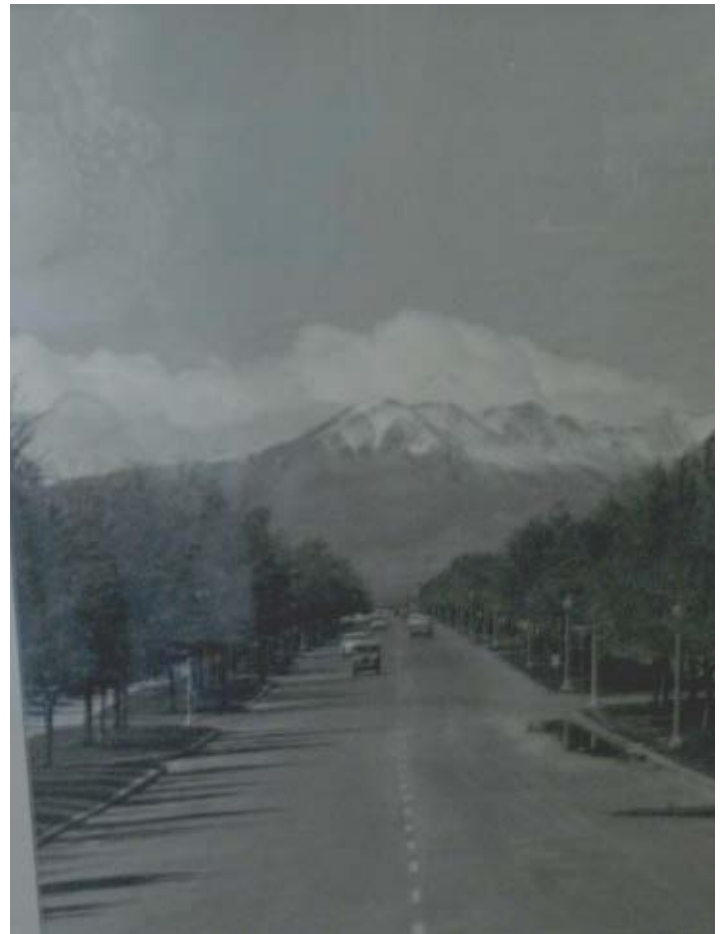
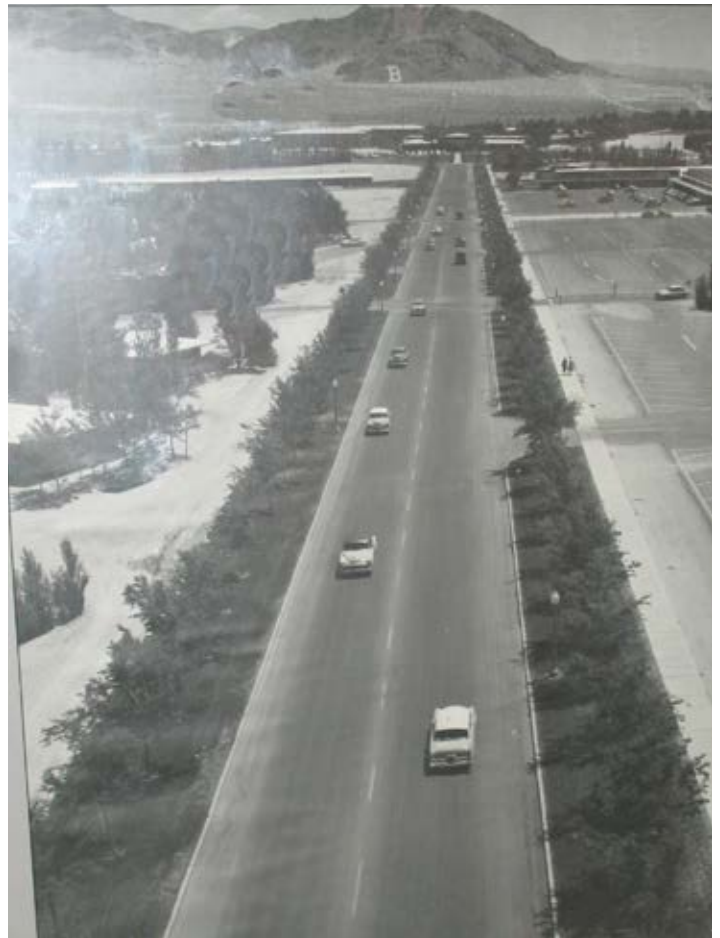
Perhaps because as yet I had no personal experience with any sex acts at all, the book that hangs most markedly in my memory was what by later standards was an extremely tame, even primitive, book about sex positions. The positions were no doubt described, because most of the book was in printed text, but I paid no attention to that. What entirely captured my attention was that in the middle of each page of dense text was a very simple line drawing. The figures were barely more than stick figures but enhanced by oval-shaped body parts suggesting heads, bottoms, breasts, bellies and thighs. No genitalia was represented that I recall. I would have noticed penises, I'm pretty sure. I knew at once, however, that human males and females were being depicted, lying on top of each other, this way and that. The drawings assumed real human partners would have to take responsibility for knowing what goes into what. This was the macro view for the social science researcher, or else for refugees from the Victorian era. I'm trying to stress how completely non-erotic these drawings were. But to me, they were pure enlightenment.



The most enlightening and surprising image in the book, and the one that sticks in my mind's eye still today, more than 50 years later, is the line drawing of a position for an obese couple that involved a dining table chair, the couple defying gravity to accomplish the act upon it. Even then, at age 15, with no experience whatsoever, I could see it couldn't possibly work.

Mr. and Mrs. Thixton were very handsome and trim-figured people in 1964 when it was extremely rare to see an obese person. Even so, my memory and the connections it compels are strange indeed. Whenever I think of the Thixtons, I first think of what a great teacher he was and how engaging his class was. But then, it always surprises me that my next thought is the image of the obese stick couple on a straight-back chair, more like hovercraft than humans.

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# Class of 1965 Reunion Planning Committee

☞Kären Bjorklund Locklin

Overall Coordination , Venue, Financials

☞Karen Day Manatt

Outreach, Locating Classmates, Master Contact List

☞Charlotte Blackmon Collins

Website, Email Blasts, Memory Placemat Design, eBook Design

☞Rob Johnson

Motivation and Arm Twisting

☞Rob Olsen

Nametags and Photo Graphics

☞Harold “Buddy” Phillips & Randy Kline

Veterans List

☞Fran Riggs Fenical & Julie Nelson Rich

Saturday Evening Program

☞Roy Randolph & Joe Hibbs

Ridgecrest Flyer Posting

☞Tom Allen & Rex Randolph

Outreach

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